

Major broadcasting companies use the public airwaves free of charge and are obligated by law to serve the public interest. At election time, they should be providing balanced news coverage of all candidates' positions and voting/legislation/policies records. Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation to our democracy.

When large companies control the airwaves, they control the information available to the masses and in effect destroy our Constitution's guarantee of a "free press." Instead of unbiased information to freely choose the political direction in which we want our country to go, or a multiplicity of perspectives so we can decide for ourselves what is most credible, we get whatever is perceived as good for their business interests. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve careful scrutiny to insure that the public's needs for information are being protected.

Sincerely,
Barbara Wade.